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THE THEOLOGICAL POSITION OF ARMINIUS.

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SOMEWHERE about the year 1591 there sat within his study a young Divine, of lofty forehead, and face naturally serene, but wearing now an expression of anxious thought. The pages on which his eyes rested intently were those of a pamphlet, just given to the public, entitled: "Answer to some arguments of Calvin and Beza on the subject of Predestination." This book had been put into his hands, that he might employ his learning and genius in its refutation.

To this work he had now betaken himself, at the earnest request of a friend, and the more earnest solicitation of his own feelings. Beza, whose theological views were therein assailed, was his old teacher, for whom he felt a respect approaching to reverence. In what way could he so happily express this regard as in defending that System of Theology, of which his honored friend was the highest exponent, and in the soundness of which his reputation, as a Theologian, was more or less involved? To such a task he could not be averse. He enters upon it. But while he reads, and ponders to plan a thorough refutation—too true to conscience to use any means but the most ingenuous—doubts begin to arise in regard to some of his own opinions, respecting the point in question, till at length, conquered by the force of truth, he becomes a convert to the opinions it was his purpose to refute.

Till this time Jacob Van Harmine, better known as James Harminius, was a zealous follower of Calvin, and an able and accomplished preacher of the Calvinistic Theology. But now his sentiments are changed, and the alarm is sounded, that Dr. Arminius has renounced Orthodoxy, and embraced *the new views*.

At that time, Calvinism was extensively received among the reformed churches, and any dissent from it, by a prominent Divine, occasioned of course, not a little commotion. Disputes arose, the peace and harmony of the churches in Amsterdam and its vicinity were disturbed, and soon all Holland was in a state of religious war.

Arminius was vehemently attacked by the Calvinistic Party, and branded as a heretic, and as such, hunted as long as he lived. But this life was short. His was a nature too sensitive not to be deeply wounded by the poisoned shafts of slander, though carrying before him the shield of a high and holy purpose. Fatigue of body and anguish of mind hurried him down to the grave. He died on the 19th of October 1609, after a severe warfare of eight years, having only the year previous been summoned before the States General to give an account of his sentiments. Of these,—their character and influence, I am now to speak.

To this end, it will be well to review the main doctrines, in which Arminius differed from the prevailing Theology of the time.

The Arminian Controversy first sprung out of a difference of opinion on the single point in Calvinistic Theology of Predestination. Calvin thought, that the decree of God in Predestination was positively and absolutely to elect to eternal salvation certain persons whom he had not then called into being. Arminius,—that the decree of God was to elect out of men, already created, and fallen, those who would answer to His call, by the true obedience of faith. But difference of opinion could not long exist on this dogma alone. The dispute soon extended to all the articles connected with it—that is, to the entire doctrine of the Five Points—so called.

In opposition to Calvin's doctrine of Particular Redemption, Arminius taught, that Christ died for all mankind, although

none received the benefit of his atoning death, but those who believed and obeyed the Gospel.

Against the Calvinistic doctrine of Irresistible Grace, Arminius maintained, that saving grace is bestowed on all; that it is sufficient for their salvation, but acts suavisely, and may be resisted.

Intimately connected with this, was the doctrine of Free-will, or the moral ability of man. Here it is hard to define the precise point of dispute. In his idea of Human Depravity Arminius is declared by some to be as Calvinistic as Calvin himself, while others affirm that he absolutely denied this dogma. Upon this point, whatever may be the cause of such contrariety of opinion, it must be evident to all who will examine the writings of Arminius generally, that they contain sentiments utterly inconsistent with those maintained by Calvin, both as to the nature of Original Sin, and the extent of the consequences of the Fall.

Lastly, Arminius questioned the doctrine of the Final Perseverance of the Saints.

Such were the controverted points on which Arminius was declared to be heretical. In other respects he believed with his countrymen generally, in the doctrines contained in the usual systems of Divinity which the times then afforded.

In relation to the popular Theology of his day, the position of Arminius was that of a *Reformer*. In all honesty he had discovered what he believed to be errors, gross errors, in the received theological opinions, and with equal honesty he felt it his duty to say so. Neither was his position a merely negative one. He had something to assert in the place of what he denied. His mind had hold of a great truth, not indeed a new truth, but one that needed to be brought out to view as it had not been;—that of the Free Agency of man. This is the main line of thought on which Calvin and Arminius differ. Calvin, from a laudable zeal to ascribe, in the highest sense, all our blessings to the good will and pleasure of God, in opposition to the spirit of his age, when the Romish doctrine of Supererogation was boasting human merit, had, in placing all things in God, annihilated man. His System called in question the moral ability of man, and introduced into the moral world

a necessity, equivalent to that which reigns in the physical. Arminius felt this. Such a system offended his inward consciousness, destroyed, as he looked upon it, the sentiment of human dignity, and allowed of nothing but an arbitrary will. To such a Theology his soul experienced an incredible repugnance. To his sympathetic nature its doctrines were desolating.

The doctrine of Divine Decrees which was the basis of Calvin's theory concerning man and religion, was to his mind, nothing short of inevitable necessity and binding fate. In opposition to this, Arminius contended for the idea of future contingency. "I am desirous," said he, "that we should contend for the necessity of God alone, that is for his necessary existence, and internal acts, and should contend for the contingency of all other things and effects."

In thus asserting God's foreknowledge of future contingencies, in denial of Calvin's doctrine of absolute decrees, Arminius, it seems to me, not only suggested an important improvement in the theories of religion, but did much to advance the cause of practical goodness.

The doctrine of absolute Decrees not only destroys the value, but even the possibility of morality. What God has absolutely decreed is inevitable. Absolute decree, absolute necessity. The conclusion is as absolute as the premise. Even the subtile logic of the Schoolmen can not *theologize* it away. But there is not the same difficulty in the thought of God's foreknowledge of future contingency. I do not see that the prescience of God must necessarily affect the freedom of any actions. But, in vain should I try to retain belief in my free agency, were I convinced that no distinction could be made, between what is settled by absolute decree, and what is in itself contingent. If nothing in the Universe be contingent, then no event can by any possible means be other than it is. If nothing be contingent, then it is predetermined what our condition shall be at any and every period of our being, both here and hereafter, now and forever. Why then should we exhaust our energies in vain struggles, beating against the bars of iron destiny! But Arminius did not accept this theory of the Divine Government. No;—but by opposing it in valiant

disregard of the persecution he was willing to suffer in the cause of Truth he endeavored to

“—Assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.”

He contended that the electing grace of God had reference to character,—*character only*. Thus he sought to inspire his fellow-men with the sentiment of human worth, and apply such a motive to their hearts, as would induce them to make earnest efforts for their own salvation. While he allowed with Paul, that God worked in man, of his own good will and pleasure, with Paul he also maintained, that man must in deed, as well as in name, co-operate with God in the work of Redemption.

In this controversy there was also involved a great ethical question. Calvin, lost in the sublime idea, that God is all in all, maintained that the will of God is the only ground of moral distinction; that the will of God alone makes a thing right, or wrong. Arminius took the converse of this proposition, and asserted, that God wills a thing because it is right in and of itself; from some intrinsic and essential quality in its own character.

According to Calvin, moral distinctions are arbitrary; the mere volitions of an absolute will, the enactments of supreme power. This view Arminius opposed. He denied that it is the mere arbitrary will of God, which constitutes whatever of a moral nature takes place throughout the universe, right or wrong; and contended that moral differences could exist as by an *a priori* necessity, independently of the Deity; that they are not created by divine legislation, but rather are the necessary result of the natural properties and relations of things—the essential laws of being, of which the will of God is not the cause, but simply the expression of an already existing, eternal, unalterable fact, in the very constitution of every object and being in the universe.

That Arminius' statement upon this subject is the more correct one, notwithstanding it strikes at the root of certain moral Philosophies which have, too long, had an influence in the world, will be generally acknowledged, I apprehend, by those who think most profoundly upon such subjects.

It was the infidel Hobbes, who thought, that nothing was either right or wrong in its own nature, but is either made one or the other by the laws of the land. According to his theory, there is no absolute right, but morality is degraded into mere expediency, or worse, into caprice. A fallacy more false and dangerous was never uttered. It makes a mockery of rectitude. Allow that human law can make an action either virtuous or vicious, and morality is no longer of any essential value. Let society act upon this principle, and there would be introduced into the Moral world a confusion as chaotic, as would take place in the Material, were the law of gravitation suspended.

But if the theory, that human enactments make the distinction between right and wrong, be thus subversive of all moral beauty and harmony, and destroys the intrinsic worth of all virtue, the kindred theory, that they are the arbitrary laws of God, has a tendency to the same end. This theory is pernicious, because it lowers the standard of moral excellence, and presents God to the thoughts as a Being of supreme, arbitrary Power, rather than as a Being of just and holy Love.

But beautiful—noble is the opposite theory! That represents virtue as something to be honored, loved and practised, not simply because it is *commanded*—not simply because it may in its results be beneficial—but solely for its own sake out of regard for *its own exalted nature*. It represents virtue to be, of all objects in the universe, the highest in rank: “the great illuminating point of mind, as the sun is the illuminating centre of matter.”

The principles, then, [for which Arminius fought were of the highest importance. They were truth, and nobly did he contend for them, with great natural ability, and distinguished learning.

The immediate consequences which flowed from the disputes in which he engaged, as I have already said, were dissension and discord in the churches, and sorrow and suffering to himself and his friends. And after his death the controversy went on, till, by the Council of Dort, the asserters of his opinions were commanded to renounce their views, or quit Holland.

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Two hundred years have passed away, and more, and the doctrines of Arminius are now the sentiments of a large pro-

portion of Trinitarian Christians, having had for their advocates a Newton, a Clarke, a Locke, and a Boyle.

Such being the character and influence of his sentiments, the position to which Arminius must be assigned as a Theologian is one highly honorable to him, as a Philosopher, a Scholar, and a Man. And not only is it his glory to have taught more enlarged views of God's economy in the salvation of his creatures, and contributed greatly to the cause of practical religion, but he also adopted more liberal views of church communion than those which prevail even now. He taught, that Christians of all Protestant denominations should form one great Community, riveted together, and upheld, not by sameness of creed, but by the bonds of charity and brotherly love.

Were he living now, his sentiments and his spirit would not be far, if at all, behind the age. Indeed, to that revolutionary movement through which we have just passed, whereby the harsh features of Calvinism have been greatly mitigated, he gave an early impulse.

Of the general character of Arminius it were pleasant to speak, but the limits of this article will not permit. To his upright, Christian character no higher tribute need be paid, than the words of his biographer Brandt, when he says, that by his example he confirmed the truth of the motto on his seal, in the sentiment of which he greatly delighted: "*Bona conscientia Paradisus.*" A good conscience is Paradise.

"SPEAK FOR THE RIGHT!"

BETTER *one*, single and alone,
By Truth and Right made strong,
Than a faithless band of a thousand men
Contending for the Wrong.

Better a little village, where
Ten righteous poor are found,
Than mighty Sodoms, rich with gold,
By Sin and Falsehood bound.

Better a little state, whose sons
With tyrants will not band;—
Whose toil-worn hands are clean from blood,
Than a broad and conquering land.

Better a church of "two or three,"
Gathered in Jesus' name,
In whom the fire of love to man
Burns with a deathless flame;—

Who, like "the good Samaritan"
Ne'er pass the sufferer by,
Nor leave those "fallen among thieves"
Amid their woes to die;

Who call the scorned and trampled slave
A man, a *brother* man;
And speak for Justice and the Right
In spite of human ban.

Better a church of two or three
Thus to Christ's spirit true,
Than a multitude that call him "Lord,"
Who yet God's will ne'er do.

Then, brother! fear thou not to stand,
All single and alone,
For the cause of Truth and Righteousness
To wealth and fame unknown.

And angels, by the world unseen,
Shall come to strengthen thee;
While the Spirit of Almighty Truth
Thy Comforter shall be.

Better, then, single and alone,
By Truth and Right made strong,
Than with applauding crowds to stand
Contending for the Wrong.

And to thy soul these words of Christ
A *mighty host* shall be,
To aid thy toils, — "I'm not alone,
The Father is with ME."

J. R.

AUTUMN WOODS, HUMBLE VIRTUE, AND SUBMISSIVE FAITH.

ONE bright autumnal afternoon, after being confined for many days to the house, and feeling moreover something disturbed and depressed in spirit, I wandered forth to seek amid my favorite woods the quiet and repose of mind which I needed.

The narrow confines of the town were soon passed, and leaving far behind all signs that might remind one of human grief or unhappiness, I walked rapidly onward, and soon found myself amid the winding paths of the deep and shady forest, whose every tree and shrub were known to me, and seemed to greet me with the affectionate regard of an old and familiar friend. The hour seemed peculiarly fitted for repose and meditation, and in the calm stillness of the air there was an excitement and exhilaration of spirit, that is seldom felt in the more balmy days of spring, or amid the fervent heats of summer. Before me, lay the green fields sloping down to the river, whose waters "sparkled in the sunny beam," while at a little distance, the harbor and distant lighthouse came into view, — the stately ships going on to their different havens, and bearing their varied messages of joy and sorrow to many homes and hearts. The crested waves of the ocean dashed and foamed on the rocks beneath, while far in the distance could be traced the faint blue outlines of the distant hills, a soft and shading mist gathering around their summits, rendering the scene more lovely from its very indistinctness. Around me, were the forests, the great temples of Nature, filled with life, and beauty, and glory, yet tinged with

"That deeper, darker green,
Prevenient to decay."

The walks were strewn with the painted leaves of autumn, — the summer vine hung droopingly upon the withered branch of some noble tree, and the delicate frost flower and Aster, or the bright hues of the Golden Rod, filled many a shady nook with beauty and delight. — A faint, soft breeze rustled the

tops of the pines, while now and then a squirrel darted from amid the green boughs, and stealthily sought its secret cell, in which to deposit the gathered stores of winter. — Wearied at length with threading my way through narrow paths, or breaking through the rough underwood of the forest, I seated myself on a moss covered rock, beneath the bending branches of an ancient pine. — There was no sound to disturb the calm repose of the hour, and a “holy silence” reigned around. Truly,

“Nature with folded hands seemed there,
Kneeling at her evening prayer,”

and the mysterious harmony and beauty of the hour were not unfelt. At such moments there is a deep, and even painful feeling of contrast, between the perfectness and beauty of the outward world, and the consciousness of inward want and failure, — between the entire completeness of the one, and the imperfect fulfilments of the other. A longing for higher aims and purposes fills the spirit, — for a field of activity where some definite end may be completed, where the soul may become more truly conscious of its own innate powers, and the fervent aspirations of the heart’s better moments may be more entirely fulfilled. All around is so complete and beautiful in its season, fulfilling even to the minutest leaf, its perfect destiny; and is man alone forever to remain imperfect? what results can and ought to be accomplished even in this life? —

I looked around, — and just beside me, a bright, beautiful flower opened its delicate petals to the sun, and looked up, as if to cast a loving smile on all around. I examined its exquisite structure, — its tender leaves, the delicate shading of its varied tints, and then I thought how gradually it had attained its perfect form, — from the minute seed sown by the autumn winds, then buried beneath the snows and storms of winter, until the warm breath of spring unfolded its dark casement, and the living green of the future plant appeared, henceforth to grow and bud and blossom, beneath the smiles and genial warmth of summer, — till now, it lifted its head in its complete beauty, as perfect in its humble sphere as the towering pine or the majestic oak that wreathed their branches above me. — The lesson was simple, yet full of truth and beauty.

I felt in some degree its force, but was yet to learn more fully in another form, that not an *extended sphere*, but a *right and true spirit*, is all that God requires of us.

Feeling more calm than at first, yet still dissatisfied, I left my rural retreat, and passing from beneath the dark shades of the forest, found there would be ample time ere my return home to visit a friend, poor indeed in the eyes of the world, yet rich in the inward treasures of love and peace.

As I again returned to the noise and confinement of the town, a momentary feeling of sadness came over me, that I could not ever breath the free, fresh air of the fields and woodlands, surrounded by all there is pure and elevating in nature, with the broad canopy of heaven above, and the fresh green turf beneath, — where the eye might ever rest on scenes of sublimity and beauty, and the soul be kindled with high and holy aspirations from the altar of nature herself. But a deeper voice within replied: "Is there not in man a higher power than in nature? — Is there not in the unseen spirit, a depth and sublimity, far surpassing the grandeur of rock, or mountain, or waterfall? Is not Immortality greater than time? And in the narrow streets and crowded rooms of the city, is there not often a depth and beauty of spiritual life revealed, far surpassing the noblest forms of the outward creation, — a poetry and a holy power, that Nature in her greatest developments cannot rival?"

But my reflections were interrupted by the merry shouts of children, engaged in a game of ball, and turning to notice one, whose bright black eye and happy face had long been familiar to me, I asked him, if his Aunt Mary were at home. "O yes," he replied, "follow me, and just step into the lower room, while I call her, for I suppose she is still up stairs with poor Hitty, who is very sick to-day." And before I had time to ask another question, he disappeared. In a few minutes the door opened, and I was most cordially greeted by my old friend. She looked wearied, but with her usual bright and cheerful smile she invited me to rest myself, for, said she, "you must be fatigued after your long and solitary walk; yet surely, every one ought to enjoy such a day as this, when Heaven smiles so brightly, and the air is so fresh and invigorating." I thanked her for her kindness, but added, "Although I wanted much

to see you, I really hoped to have found you out, for a walk would have done you so much good this afternoon." "These autumnal days are indeed very beautiful," she replied, "yet while poor Hitty is so sick I cannot leave her, for she depends so much on my assistance that it would be hard to let her suffer, if I could aid her." "How long has she been so very ill?" I inquired. "About three weeks," was the reply. "And have you none to relieve you, or has not she any relations to assist her in any way?" "My sister comes in occasionally, when she is able to leave the children, but she has much to do, and I ought not to expect her very often. And our poor friend too is alone in the world, — no mother or sister to watch beside her, and pay her those little attentions a sick person so much needs; — and if I can soothe or ease her pain, I am sure it gives me happiness to do it." "But do you not feel the want of sleep?" "True," she replied, "I have not enjoyed one night's good rest for more than a fortnight, yet I feel bright, and am still able to do all that is necessary. I only hope that my strength will last, so that the poor wanderer may find a home here so long as she lives, for she has had a hard struggle through life, and needs a quiet resting-place."

Just as she was speaking the door opened, and a little child of six years bounded into the room, her hair carelessly blown over her face by the wind, and her dark, laughing eye full of merriment. I instantly recognized my little favorite, an orphan child, whom my good friend two years before had taken to her home, and to whom she had since supplied, so far as possible, the place of both parents, — though many would have felt, that with her narrow means, to have received would have been their rightful portion, rather than to have given. "Aunt Mary, Aunt Mary," she exclaimed, "only see what the kind lady gave me, these beautiful flowers for Hitty, because she is so sick, and can't go out, and then these cakes for myself, — but you shall have one, and cousin Georgy too, for you are so kind, and give me my bread and milk, and let me sleep in that nice bed close to you." "O I do love you," she exclaimed, and springing into her lap, she threw her arms around her neck, when for the first time perceiving me, a bright glow mantled her cheek, and looking somewhat abashed at having said so much before a comparative stranger, she stole away,

and in a few minutes her ringing laugh was heard in the yard, as she called her little kitten to frolic with her. "Nobody can tell what a comfort and blessing that little child is to me," said Aunt Mary, "for when I feel disheartened or discouraged, I have only to look into her bright face, and a new life and energy seems breathed into me. What indeed should we do without children! they are ever so full of life and hope and joy, that one cannot long feel sad in their presence."

In a few minutes I rose to leave, promising to send some little things to Hitty. "I thank you for your visit," said she, "and hope you will come in again soon, for it does me good to see others, though at present unable to go out myself. "But," she added, "I wish you would call and see how Mrs. Thornton's little girl is to-day, and then send me word to-morrow, for I always loved her, and it seems very sad to have her only child so sick." I gladly promised to comply with her request, and again bade her good-night.

As I left her humble room, the sun was just sinking amid clouds of gold and crimson, tinging the autumnal foliage with a brighter radiance, and casting a rich and brilliant glow over the whole heavens. I watched the gradual fading of the clouds and of the glowing landscape, until the calm, clear light of evening fell around, when hastening on my way, I directed my steps to the house of my friend, my mind meanwhile busily occupied in thinking of the humble room I had just left. "If ever there were a true Christian or philanthropist in the world, I inwardly exclaimed, Aunt Mary is one! No friend, however poor or destitute, none, however erring, but comes within the range of her gentle sympathy. Ever sacrificing her own comforts to others, her lowly roof has been a home for many a poor wanderer, and often have I known her give to a half-clad child, or poor beggar, clothes from her own scanty wardrobe, and when told that she might need them herself, "O no", she would exclaim, "*they* need them more, — I have still one pair of shoes left, and when they are worn out, some kind friend will provide yet another for me. I have never really been in want, and God will ever care for those who truly trust in him." Cheerful and hopeful, she is ever ready to impart to others of her time and strength, and none who

have ever seen her by the bedside of the sick and dying, but will bear testimony to her gentle influence and love.

"She truly *feels*, and speaks from an *inward* faith and conviction," emphatically said a sick friend to me, one day, with whom she had watched the previous night, "would that my faith were only as firm as hers! And when in the night I asked to have the curtains raised, that I might once more enjoy the clear, still moonlight, she complied with my request, and softly added: 'The moon that walks in brightness says, that God is good,' and they were just the words I needed, — they strengthened and comforted me."

I thought of the little flower I had gathered early that afternoon, and felt that now I had received a still more emphatic lesson. Am I despondingly asking for different and wider spheres of action, and yet what have I ever accomplished in comparison with this poor woman? Does not a true spirit, from its very nature, find an appropriate sphere of usefulness, and is not a trusting, living faith, — a heart filled with goodness, and striving to impart to those within the circle of its influence, its own spiritual riches, — is not this, all that God requires of us? Is it not the spirit, — the motive with which we act, rather than the amount accomplished, that is of the deepest moment?

Occupied with such thoughts, I reached my friend's house, and entered the pleasant parlor, — a room far different in its exterior from that I had just quitted, yet there was nothing of display in the simple furniture, but every thing betokened a refined and cultivated taste; and the books lying upon the table, the paintings and engravings that at once pleased the eye and gratified the taste, — the cabinet of minerals, — the vases of flowers that shed their perfume through the room, — the half finished drawing upon the table, all bore a silent testimony, that something was regarded beyond mere external show.

In a few minutes I went up to my friend's chamber, and opening the door found her seated by the side of a little couch on which lay her only child, a little girl of two years. From her countenance I instantly discerned her anxiety, but assuming a tone of cheerfulness, I said: "And how is little Nell to-day? I hoped to have enjoyed a good frolic with her, before

returning home." "Hush, hush," she exclaimed: "she is very, very ill. — Her father has been suddenly called from home, and now I am alone — God, in his mercy, spare me yet this trial." She said no more, but buried her face in the couch and wept. I instantly threw off my shawl, determined to remain at least until Mr. Thornton's return. Hour after hour passed on, and still we sat, listening to the faint, low breathings of the child, on whose beautiful brow the angel of death had already placed its signet. Midnight drew near — no sound disturbed the hushed stillness of the room, when suddenly the child roused herself for an instant, stretched out her little arms, and exclaiming: "Mother, Mother," sank back upon her pillow, and gently ceased to breathe. I could not speak, for I felt that in that mother's heart there was a depth of grief that none but she could fathom. Yet there is a power in such scenes, that none but those who have witnessed can fully understand. — Death, when it thus appears, is dismantled of every gloom, and seems rather like the beautiful angel, who comes to lead us with a gentle hand, into "the land of the great departed."

As I gazed upon her form, so beautiful in death, the half smile that still lingered upon her countenance seemed to speak a message of joyful hope to the sorrowing parents, and the bright flowers that were scattered around her sunny couch, and rested in her clasped hands, were fitting emblems of her own purity and gentleness.

An open Bible lay upon the table beside her, and my eye rested upon these words. "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven." I looked up, and Anna's eye met mine, as for the last time she imprinted a kiss on the marble forehead of the little one. No word was spoken, but the suppressed emotion of her whole manner indicated the deep struggle through which her spirit had passed.

Calmly she turned to her various duties, and sought in contributing to the happiness of others a relief from the desolation that filled her home and heart. Yet the sweet spirit of little Nell ever seemed near to her, as a pure and guardian angel, and from this time, there was a warmer glow of sympathy, a deeper faith in spiritual realities, — a feeling that there was

indeed a Home for her above, where she should again meet the object of her warm affection in her purity, and innocence, and gentle love. And was the life even of this little child in vain? Passing away from mortal view, like the fragile flower of summer, did she not still live, in the warmer affections, the purer sympathies, the holier aspirations of these who had loved her? And was not her little sphere of influence productive of as high results as many which the world calls great? "O, there is not an angel added to the host of Heaven, but does its blessed work, in those that loved it here. When Death strikes down the beautiful and young, from every fragile form, from which he lets the panting spirit free, a hundred virtues rise, in shapes of Mercy, Charity and Love, to walk the world, and bless it with their light. Of every tear that sorrowing mortals shed on such green graves, some good is born, some gentler nature comes." Such were my reflections, as I sat the next evening in my own quiet chamber, and when I thought of the varied events of this autumnal afternoon, I felt that my question had indeed been answered; — that not alone those spheres of duty and activity are to be desired or sought for, which to the world's eye seem great, but that in the humbler and more retired walks of life, an inward power may be developed, a spirit of love, and benevolence and holy faith may be strengthened that shall ever lead the soul onward to higher and holier aspirations for excellence, — which will not and cannot rest, until they seek repose at the fountain of all Love and Holiness.

To those who feel that they are accomplishing but little, who long for wider fields of effort, we would say, "Labor diligently and earnestly in the sphere in which Providence has placed you, but whether able to accomplish more or less, cultivate within the living *spirit* of progress, and this inward desire *will* find some outward form of manifestation; for in the beautiful language of Spencer,

"The noble heart, that harbors virtuous thought,
And labours with a glorious, great intent,
Will never rest, until it forth have brought
Some glory excellent!"

The fields though ripe for the harvest, are not yet filled with laborers, and may not your own earnestness excite in other

hearts a more fervent zeal ? Cultivate a kind, living, affectionate sympathy with all ;—be conscious of a spiritual vitality *within*, and then be not too anxious to see the results of your efforts,—but feel a deep assurance, that no seed of right endeavour is ever lost, and that if in this fragmentary portion of your being, your powers have not their full scope and exercise, you may so guide, direct and cultivate them, that in the larger spheres of the future life, they shall find their full and complete development.

“T is a little thing
To give a cup of water ; yet its draught
Of cool refreshment, drained by fever'd lips,
May give a shock of pleasure to the frame,
More exquisite than when Nectarean juice
Renews the life of joy in happiest hours.
It is a little thing to speak a phrase
Of common comfort, which, by daily use,
Has almost lost its sense ; yet on the ear
Of him who thought to die unmourn'd, 't will fall
Like choicest music ; fill the glazing eye
With gentle tears ; relax the knotted hand
To know the bonds of fellowship again ;
And shed on the departing soul a sense
More precious than the benison of friends
About the honor'd death-bed of the rich,
To him, who else were lonely, that another
Of the great family is near and feels.”

H. M.

CHARITY.

“**W**HY not believe the homely letter —
That all you give will God restore !
The poor man *may* deserve it better,
And surely, surely, wants it more ;
Let but the rich man do his part,
And, — whatsoe'r the issue be
To those who ask, — his answering heart
Will gain and grow in sympathy.”

READING, AS A RECREATION.

WHEN we consider that it was a Messenger from God who came upon our earth, in the majesty of a spiritual power, breaking the ordinary laws of the material world, who said of children, — those little creatures scattered all over its green surface, “of such is the kingdom of heaven;” is it not a wonder that these words, of so spiritual meaning, are still imperfectly apprehended, and that men still practically nullify this truth, by a determined postponement of heaven beyond this world’s childhood-life, this beginning of a very long existence; and that children still are educated, as for a world without a heaven? And eighteen centuries have rolled slowly away; for how interminable does that time seem to man, who is but for a few days, while to Him, unto whom “a thousand years are as one day,” it may appear a speedy recognition of the truth which now begins to be made. Children have been born into existence, the joy of their parents, by the law of instinctive parental love. Yet they have been victims: — here, of a sacrifice to the river, to fire, to some hideous idol; — there, to the State, — born for it, and to bear it on their bleeding bodies, as millions growing up to fulfil the destiny of war can testify. Not a few, in later than barbarian times, have been born to the more enlightened barbarism of hereditary privilege and place, and to bear down from generation to generation — a name. And so, too, in the individual aims and purposes of parents, children, how many, are born for this world, this scene of time, in entire forgetfulness of its so hasty passage as that “wise men have contended who shall best fit man’s condition, with words signifying his vanity and short abode.”

Yet their cause, on the whole, has steadily advanced, and as the result of our peculiar institutions, in no country more than in our own has it been forwarded for the sake of their own developement and salvation, apart from all extrinsic and lower objects.

In these times the idleness of savage life is not to be feared for them nor the unbroken toil of serfdom. One who has well defined “the philosophy of work and play” has indeed opened

a new era in their religious nature, and, doubtless, true ideas of their nature and wants are to be rapidly unfolded, perhaps more rapidly than ever, following one who walks as a discoverer in a strange region. "Work is transitional," says he, "having its good in its end. The design is that by a fixed law of nature it shall pass into play. This is its proper honour and joy."

The subject of recreation has obtained no little attention. It is an allowed necessity in the wants of our nature, and it has been mainly, and for the most part judiciously provided for. One branch of it still demands more consideration — Reading — as a recreation. In this department more than in any other, restrictions have been made, and injunctions over and over again laid upon the young to profitable reading. And shall not the young sometimes be let loose from this striving for an end ; shall they not sometimes sit down and enjoy, literally enjoy their reading, without one thought beyond that ? If they may not, they will never unfold or acquire that love for reading, which we hold to be most desirable, and most unattainable, if not cultivated in early life. Because study, which is to the young work, and hard work, is not natural or healthy to be unintermitted, and if all intellectual activity, excited by books, is to be of that nature, we have as a result, a diseased state, and natural aversion to what is disconnected from all free, joyous, action of the mind. How many parents would rejoice to exchange the wild, reckless, pleasure-hunting tastes of the son, for the enjoyment of the book ! How many would exchange the frivolous vanity, the heartless coquetry of the daughter, for the enjoyment of the book ! and there is no security, but in that it is enjoyment. How many men and women in those later hours, when the heat and excitement of life is on the wane, when sorrow has pressed, and sickness and inability have shut them up in their chambers, whence, they know, their feet shall now no more blithely cross the threshold, but slowly and painfully, if at all, before they are borne across it, once and forever, unto a new and narrow home ; — how many through those days, long for the enjoyment, which next to thinking is the most independent of all other persons and things, — the enjoyment of reading.

It may excite surprise to say that this enjoyment is com-

paratively rare. Yet we believe it would sadden a lover of his kind, to know how many in active life have never felt it—to know how few men, out of the regular professions, read, habitually and daily, much beside the newspapers, and how much less the number of women who abstract even a small portion of time from the routine of woman's endless duties, and her ceaseless round of small amusements, for reading of any kind. "The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word," unless there be a genuine love for it, reached like affection for any other object, through an experience. There are, we forget not, some instances of an insatiable, and perhaps natural, love for reading; some Chattertons sitting in the solitary church, or the desolate garret, year after year, pursuing there his sole pleasure. They are exceptions to the general rule, found as often in the class we consider as under adverse circumstances, as in the more favoured. One, very familiar with children, states, that by far the greater part have not a natural or real love for reading. Those words of our Saviour cover the whole ground, including the liabilities of rich and poor. We would desire therefore, to implant and cultivate a genuine love for reading in the young mind. And it must be made to play as well as work, for one is no less profitable than the other. And be it remembered, that almost their only work, or call for application, lies in that province. Therefore, in grave and almost anxious conscientiousness, we stand as the advocate of what is termed 'light reading'; and for our present purpose, quite happily so, involving in the idea, opposition to weight and darkness—burden and gloom. It is a difficult point to decide, what shall come under this head. This, certainly, shall not. The foul mass that issues daily from the press, like the disgorgings of a monster; in yellow covers and in all imaginable shapes and sizes. Not the 'French novels,' nor 'local plays', which now shuffle and stamp across the stage, trampling the dignity and legitimate office of the drama in the mire. Not these, by any means. Too much pains to examine, too untiring attention to what is read by the young, cannot be devoted. We are not pleading for unlimited, unlicensed reading, but for generous reading;—not seeking to remove safe-guards, but,

by enlarging the boundaries of safe ground, to prevent any wish to go beyond it; holding thus security, when, by accident, the barriers are broken down.

History, — Sacred and Profane, Biography, Narrations of almost all possible conditions of men and things, pass comparatively unquestioned, as suitable reading for the young; when, in truth, they are often vehicles of the most erroneous ideas, most prejudiced views, and utterly false statements. But there are mountain loads of that which is good, and unless we were insane, we could not discredit it as profitable reading for the young — if they enjoy it. But no reading is profitable, unless it is apprehended. "Words convey nothing," says one of the most logical, yet devout minds of our community, — "Words in themselves are nothing, only as the mind clothes them with its own perceptions. Where there is no appreciation, there is no sympathy, where there is no sympathy, there is no communication." The ancient Hebrew Prophet was bid to eat the roll, upon which the prophecies were written. And it were well to understand the sound philosophy which lay under the symbolic act. It is food that supports the physical frame, it is food that supports the mental and spiritual system. And in either case, it must become incorporated with the system, part and parcel of it, to nourish and keep it in life.

In the young, according to natural laws, the imagination and the sentiments are unfolding rapidly, while the purely intellectual capacities are more slowly advancing. But there is a too general desire to force the intellect in advance, and feed — over-feed, and surfeit it with knowledge. Hence arises so much superficial education of the head, while the heart, which needs as much to be nurtured, cherished by incitement and check, cultivated into its full expansion, lies waste and barren, or bears a rank and useless, if not poisonous growth. We do not forget that the intellect is kindled at other fires beside that of books; that the moral and religious nature is awakened by a dawn that breaks upon other than the outward and physical organs of vision. Yet books are not a small or unimportant instrument of education; much of the labor of life ought to lie in them, and our plea is, that much of the play of life may, and must, be found in them; and therefore we deprecate, as unfounded, the fear which exists, of putting fiction into the

hands of the young. Let the pure, high-toned fiction,—novel or poem, be estimated as it deserves—the young mind drawn to it, charmed away from the benumbing, deadening influences of this too worldly life. Let us not too much fear an excess of sentiment; the whole direction of modern education, in all its influences, is unfavorable to romance. Civilization, refinement, tends to moderation; it lays restraints upon the natural impulses,—good and wise in the result, we know; but we also know, that it may make machines of men. The free, full gush of genuine feeling is confined, kept back, through the life of many; and as we gaze sadly along their verdureless track, we pray and trust, that beyond that last earthly barrier, the Gate of Death, it flows out in the garden of our God.

It has been argued that real life affords sufficient developement to the imagination and sentiments. But real life so contradicts the ideal results of the young mind, that it lies much of the time in doubt and unbelief. Life is a problem; it perplexes them; they cannot solve it; they need to have it demonstrated. They cannot seize abstract truths, they must be pictured to them. Hence the early language of all nations is pictorial; and we may mark the inspired wisdom of the writer of Genesis; who presents that unapproachable and sublime subject, the history of the Creation, in a series of paintings. Why expect the child to detect the deformity of vice, so disguised, so gilded as it is in life? Why expect one to see the loveliness of virtue, when the actual imperfections of humanity so cloud it, and the willing skepticism of wickedness so often denies its being? With what pure delight does he become a spectator, even an actor in the scenes, which the right-minded, high-souled author portrays; tracing cause and consequence, bringing all, at last, to a just issue. The author, above quoted, finds, in the philosophy of our nature, “the secret of that profound passion for the drama, which has been so conspicuous in all cultivated nations. We love to see life in its feeling and activity separated from its labours and historic results. Could we see all changes transpire poetically or creatively, that is, in play, letting our soul play with them as they pass, then it were only poetry to live. Then to admire, love, laugh,—then to abhor, pity, weep,—all were alike grateful to us; for the view of suffering separated from all reality save what it has to feeling,

only yields a painful joy, which is the deeper joy because of the pain."

That department of literature which we call fiction, in which romance is supposed to lie, (though in point of fact, as often found in the natural movements of real life,) has been too much left to the occupancy of the base-minded, the unprincipled and profane. We want *religious* writers of fiction. Henry Ware called in the highest female talent to furnish fictitious reading for the young, and himself contributed his share. How few there are, among the countless many fiction-writers, who have a sense of religious responsibility. And to their entertainment we must commit those young persons who *do* love to read, for the lack of better. If this is a reason why we should not encourage fictitious reading, it is also a reason why we should demand better, which we shall do by our juster estimate of its true value, and a judicious use of it. It will always be read while it affords such deep enjoyment, and such deep enjoyment it will always afford, while human nature is what it is, and human life is what it is.

The Church of England seems to understand this matter, and some of the best of these productions bear the authorship of high names,—among the many such, cherished in her bosom, Miss Edgeworth and Miss Martineau, are we trust already blest, and always to be blessed for their work. Our reprints of English books tell of many great names beside. We have, on our side of the Atlantic, our own Miss Sedgewick, dear to the heart of every one that in the midst of a home, has prayed, that the loveliness and Holiness of that 'Home,' which she has portrayed, might rest upon his own. We have Mrs. Child, Mrs. Follen and her band of helpers, Mrs. Hall and many others; beside some delightful writers of more juvenile books than we have now had reference to. In the vast net-work of hidden influences which maps the world they are not ignoble or prejudicial operatives, who weave their beautiful web of fiction. But more precious than the famed "Gobelin tapestry", should that be,—of rare beauty, and entire strength, and of the most sacred worth, which is hung up in the chambers of the young mind. For those secret chambers, which will *not* lie unfurnished, let us provide largely and generously, of the 'beautiful,' which is always 'useful,' and the 'useful,' which is always 'beautiful.'

H. S. W.

EARLY LOST, EARLY SAVED.

BY G. W. BETHUNE.

"WITHIN her downy cradle, there lay a little child,
And a group of hovering angels unseen upon her smiled.
A strife arose among them, a loving, holy strife,
Which should shed the richest blessing over the new born life.

One breathed upon her features, and the babe in beauty grew
With a cheek like morning's blushes, and an eye of azure hue ;
Till every one who saw her, was thankful for the sight
Of a face so sweet, and radiant with ever fresh delight.

Another gave her accents, and a voice as musical
As a spring bird's joyous carol, or a rippling streamlet's fall ;
Till all who heard her laughing or her words of childish grace
Loved as much to listen to her, as to look upon her face.

Another brought from heaven a clear and gentle mind,
And within the lovely casket, the precious gem enshrined ;
Till all who knew her, wondered that God should be so good
As to bless with such a spirit, our desert world and rude.

Thus did she grow in beauty, in melody and truth,
The budding of her childhood just opening into youth,
And to our hearts yet dearer, every moment than before
She became, though we thought fondly, heart could not love her more.

Then out-spake another angel, nobler, brighter than the rest,
As with strong arm, but tender, he caught her to his breast:
"Ye have made her all too lovely, for a child of mortal race,
But no shade of human sorrow shall darken o'er her face:

Ye have tuned to gladness only the accents of her tongue,
And no wail of human anguish shall from her lips be wrung,
Nor shall the soul that shineth so purely from within
Her form of earth-born frailty ever know the taint of sin :

Lulled in my faithful bosom, I will bear her far away,
Where there is nor sin, nor anguish, nor sorrow, nor decay :
And mine, a boon more glorious than all the gifts, shall be—
Lo ! I crown her happy spirit with immortality."

Then on his heart our darling yielded up her gentle breath,
For the stronger, brighter angel who loved her best was Death."

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

A DEDICATION SERMON, BY THE REV. F. N. KNAPP.*

1 CHRONICLES xvi. 29. Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

1 CORINTHIANS iii. 16. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?

THESE words suggest to us the worship which is to be paid to God, and the temple wherein to worship Him. They tell us of a worship whose beauty is holiness, — of a temple whose consecration is the presence of the Holy Spirit, — and whose dedication is to the service of the Lord. While they exhort us to a duty, indirectly do they tell us upon what the duty is founded, and how we may perform it; and they present also an appeal to move us to its performance. It is to thoughts which connect themselves with such subjects, that I now invite your attention.

My object in what I may offer will be simply this: To say those words which may induce you to unite with me in the desire I feel to realize more fully, and continually, what it is to worship God, a desire to feel the solemnity and responsibility of taking such a step as we are now taking, a desire to know and to feel what it is we, as worshippers of God and as disciples of Jesus Christ, hereby seek to do in behalf of our own souls, and in behalf of our fellow-men, and a desire to gain strength to do it; — believing, as I do, that the holiest offering we can lay upon this new altar, will be the humble but earnest desire to find, through Christ, a way to the Father. A desire, I have said; you will therefore unite with me as those desiring, searching, — not as those waiting only to listen to the result of a search.

When read aright, life itself, all life, is solemn, because in God do we have our being; but when of our own accord, as now, we build a house and set apart a time for the express purpose of meeting God there, holding communion with Him,

* Preached on the occasion of dedicating the new church of the First Parish in Brookline, Massachusetts, December 1, 1848.

calling it God's House, and holy time, then surely we perform a solemn act, wherein to engage thoughtlessly is profanity, — faithlessly is hypocrisy, — but anxiously, yet trustingly, is joy to the soul, and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

In our day, and in this vicinity, it is of frequent occurrence to dedicate a house to the worship of God. And there can be no doubt that this familiarity leads us to overlook in some degree the full meaning and solemn nature of such an act as we have now met to perform. Our first duty then is to set this point clearly before ourselves.

If there had never yet been a house consecrated to Christian devotion, — if this, in which we are now gathered, were the first to be so consecrated, — if never till now a band of disciples of Jesus had associated themselves together, in joyous union, to invoke the presence of that Holy Spirit Jesus told of, — to speak to, and be answered by, the very God in Heaven, — to hold real communion with Him, — to ask to have their sins forgiven, their hearts made pure, — to ask to have their homes made happy, and their friends blessed, and for them all a home secured in heaven, — to ask to have their sorrows comforted, their loneliness visited, — to ask direction and strength for blessing other homes too, and their fellow men, relieving want and oppression and all sad suffering : — if never till now a band of disciples had come together for such purposes, and we — this society — were they, do you not think, my friends, that this occasion would seem a most sacred one to us? Should we not feel we were engaged in an act claiming our hearts and prayers, were assuming a position of most solemn relationship to God, were consecrating ourselves to a work altogether holy?

If we were a band newly-gathered and the only band, met together to hold communion with God our Father, — as disciples of Jesus Christ, entrusted with his holy truth, which from us is to go forth and bless a world calling in beseeching tones for deliverance and redemption, — a band of brethren, conscious of the spirit which dwelleth in them, conscious of the richness of that truth of Christ, its might above all earthly wisdom, its power to brighten this life and to open heaven, its power to give great joy, to give peace and freedom and happiness to all the children of men, to make each heart and all

hearts so full of that spirit which was in Christ, that God and Christ shall make their abode with men : — if this were so, — the first gathering of disciples, — then would this hour be a solemn hour, this spot would be the witness of that reverent awe, that thrilling joy, that anxious anticipation, those desires, those prayers, that seeking after God, that dedication of self to God, whereby alone the house is dedicated to the worship of the Lord.

Such would it be. Such is it now. Not one jot less solemn and joyous is our position here to-day, than it would be if in literal truth we were that new church of Christ, — the only one, first gathered in his name upon earth, the world with asking eyes waiting for his truth.

For is not the world waiting ? Has it yet been redeemed from sin ? Is not the call to us to gather together in his name a new call ? For, is our communion with God (if it be real and true) because other men in times past have met in temples and worshipped him ? Is it not rather because our hearts prompt us to it, our nature demands it, — is it not founded upon the fact, that we ourselves are the temple of God, having his spirit dwelling in us ?

If there be therefore to any band of Christians, gathered at any time, “if any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the spirit,” if any sacredness in standing heralds of truth, if any trust in a new mission of mercy, if any joy in devotion, if any beauty in holiness, then is that consolation, that comfort, that fellowship, for us to seek, — that joy and beauty for us to know, — that sacredness of mission for us to feel — now — to-day.

Let not our familiarity, then, with such scenes, our idea of being, as a religious society, part of a confederate body, our receiving this as an institution established by our fathers, hide from us the fact, that, as a band of worshippers, we stand before God in our own behalf, our own individuality, — not because we are part of any confederate body, but simply because we, to-day, are living souls which ask for a place of worship, a time to commune with their God ; because we ourselves desire to learn of Christ, and by him to be redeemed from our sins ; because we have heard “ glad tidings of great joy, which

are for all people," and our hearts bid us carry them forth; because to-day there are wrongs and wants and woes among men, and our hearts urge us to labor for their removal.

Thus shall we feel it to be a matter between us and God.

The success or the failure, the beliefs or the disbeliefs, the rash zeal or the stagnant deadness, of other churches, — of the great Christian Church, — will not belong to us. If we are told, that the Christian Church has a great work to do, our first question will be, how can we, this very society of Christians, do it? The work is ours, the trust belongs to us. With exulting joy are we told that Christianity is already doing much; before we respond to that joy, our question will be, But is it our Christianity, — Christ in us, — in this very society of disciples?

Is the Christian Church accused of claiming a place and holding a position it is not faithful to, as the agent of that Gospel, whose fruits Christ meant should literally be peace, freedom, knowledge, temperance, justice, brotherly love, — accused by men who, whatever their zeal, are yet acknowledged to base it on "a high moral aim," — before we fall in with others in their vain attempt to repel from the Church such accusation, we shall take it home to ourselves, whether as Christ's delegated agents, we, this society, are faithful.

Thus shall we view it as a matter between us and God, — not merging in a great association our individual responsibility, not claiming the victories, nor sharing the despondencies; nor signing the creeds, nor defending the faithlessness of any other churches, — but acting as ourselves specially entrusted with the Holy Gospel of Christ, to be read by us as the spirit of God which dwelleth in us may dictate.

In speaking thus of our position, we would not lose sight of the fact, that there is such a thing as the great Christian Church, composed of many members; that this is more than a mere general term, — the Christian Church; that it has an emphatic and definite meaning. But is not the surest way, we may say the only way, by which to measure the meaning of that fact, — is it not this, namely, to gain to ourselves a consciousness of what we, this single society of Christians, are to do, as a Church of Christ, — as *the* Church of Christ?

Then will our connection with the great Church be more

true and real ; we shall be blessed by their prayers, strengthened by their labors, cheered by the thought that, while we are bowing here, tens of thousands of other souls will be bowing also, worshippers, who worship the same God that we do, — seekers, seeking after the same Christ that we are, — laborers, laboring all for the coming of the same kingdom.

I have dwelt much at length upon this first point, because we are to go behind the fact that the Christian Church is to do this and that, is such and so. For, only by going back to what the Christian Church is founded upon, and obtaining a consciousness of our own position, — we, in our own behalf, asking God to meet us here, holding the truth of Christ as a special trust to us, joined together as this religious society, under the direction and sanction of no more ancient authority than the spirit of God, no more confederate organization than the same spirit living in Christ, dwelling in man, — only with this consciousness, I say, can we go on to ask still further the meaning for ourselves of that worship whose beauty is holiness.

And let us now see how our view of the meaning of that is going to affect the lively consciousness of our position as a society of Christian worshippers.

We have already implied what we supposed to be embraced in the term, — “a house of worship.” For we all know upon what it is that worship is founded. There is no need, therefore, that we enter into any careful examination of that constitution of man, which is the basis of this, — his relation to God and dependence upon him, the promptings of devotion and aspiration, the askings of the soul, the impulsive spring of gratitude, the turning, as by instinct, to a help above ourselves, the spirit of God within us which asks for, reverently be it said, the sympathy of God above us, that seeking after God, which is the centre and foundation of all worship, which when it is a seeking of the whole heart, is pronounced “blessed.”

There is no need, either, that we adduce the reasons to show that it is fit to have a time and a place dedicated to the purpose of expressing and cherishing those feelings of devotion and reverence, — for communing with God ; a place where all associations may help us, all that is seen or heard may quicken us ; a time which shall remind us of our relation to our Father,

and call us off from other cares ; — there is no need that I adduce the reasons to show that this is fit ; for we all know how engrossing and importunate are those cares of the world, — how they are constantly pressing in upon us.

Nor need we review the history of ancient worship, more than to say that some men have regarded it as something so awful, — approaching the great God, — that only a chosen messenger, with veiled face, might seek him, and bear the offerings of others' souls.

Nor need we review the history of later Christian worship, more than to state how some men have regarded this also as so awful in its sacredness, that it must needs be separate from all other acts of the soul, — all else of life, — having no fellowship with it ; imagining that it was something of itself and by itself, resting on a self-inherent power, whereof the end and object were answered by the mere fact of its performance, — something due to God, a debt the soul itself acknowledged, but yet a debt due to God, and that, when a certain amount was paid, the debt was so far cancelled. A worship this was which sought to separate itself from all other acts of the soul, with a Pharisaic shudder shrank from contact with common life, did not once humble itself by the thought, that it could only find its true developement and expression in connection with the true developement of the whole of man's nature, and that this last is inseparably connected with the right performance of all life's commonest duties.

We will not review in detail this history of worship. It tells of blind fanaticism, of contempt of the world, of monastic seclusion, of formal ceremonies, of a daily life degraded, from which God was shut out, that thus in an occasional transport he might be reckoned peculiarly present.

Happily, we have come now, under the guidance of Christ, to that age of truth, when we are beginning to recognize the connection between the spirit of devotion and the spirit of common life. The *connection*, I do not say the identity, but the connection and mutual influence. We have come to that time, when the house dedicated to the worship of God is made a place, in which not only to tell the glories of Him that dwelleth in the heavens and before whom angels veil their faces, — to recount His majesty and power, saying, "The Lord God

Omnipotent reigneth," — not only to learn of Christ those things which might make the soul bow low in reverence, — but also to seek from Christ, concerning the daily life of men, how they might every day — all the time — be bringing out the spirit of God which dwelleth in them, making it their motive-power of all action, making it their own spirit, and thus becoming prepared for truer worship, nearer communion; a place for seeking from Christ how to do this, and consequently a place where every condition in which man may be situated, is considered, and the question put, What would Christ have us do here? a place, in short, where all the conditions of mankind, of good or ill, joy or sorrow, which touch a single sympathy, and therefore call for some spirit to guide it, are made subjects of thought and enquiry. We have come to that age of truth, in short, when the inseparable connection between true Christian worship, as an act of devotion (strictly and literally an act of devotion), and that state of the soul, which seeks in all daily life to live out the spirit of Christ, a life of holiness, is so recognized that they are joined together, and baptized by the name of "the worship of God."

It is thus, that in the beauty of holiness we are to worship the Lord. Thus is it, that calling for this developement of the whole man, according to his highest laws of life, worship is itself a beauty, a harmony, a joy, not a penance, a pain, a deformity, — not something partial or excessive.

It is a beauty, a harmony. It may at times, with the Sabbath days, rise in gentle swells above the general level, varying the field of life, like the undulations of the landscape, covered with the brightest and earliest flowers, but which we feel to be a part of one creation, formed by the same hand, watered by the same love. Like these it is, rising in gentle swells; or, if at times abrupt, upheaved by some struggling force which could not wait to expend itself in more silent ways, still the force is from beneath, the same as that which is beneath the whole, a central source of heat, warming the shaded valleys also. Like these it is, we say, moved by a force beneath, rising most often too in gentle forms; and not something which tells clearly and only of toil and labor, something made after creation's first work was finished; thrown up

by men's hands in service to their master, or for defence in a time of siege ; or else regular in form, it may be, and great in size, but suggesting naught except the thought of a place where men are buried, and of a race which has gone. No, not such is worship. It is a beauty, a harmony, a joy.

Not confounding the two together, only placing them in their holy relations, do we speak of them thus. We mean not identity, but connection and mutual dependence. It is not losing sight of what worship is, and blending it vaguely with something else, — worship, in its most rigid definition, — it is not losing sight of what it is, that we connect thus closely with it the great idea of the soul searching for truth, struggling for deliverance from sin, striving to live true to itself in all daily life, striving to form or reform all the ways and institutions of men according to Christ's wisdom, striving to go forth blessing others with his blessing.

On this ground it is, that a Christian church, as those who meet to worship God in spirit and in truth, are looked to, and properly so, as the men who are to concern themselves with all the wrongs and sins, the griefs and sorrows, of the world, and to remove these wrongs and soothe these sorrows. They are looked to on the ground, that this is the method of life pointed out to them, — that this was one thing that Christ came to do, leaving for their use truth enough to guide them to do it, incentives enough to inspire them, the promise of his spirit to help them. Therefore they cannot know the Father, to worship Him with this higher spirit, except they live out that spirit in their daily lives, following Jesus.

I dwell upon this because it would seem that there is a tendency to overlook this absolute relation between any real approach to God in the hour of worship, and a striving to live according to the spirit of God ; whereas the highest worship can only be when the whole man is guided and developed according to Christ.

I fear we do not sufficiently recognize what Christian worship comprehends, — that it is a name which embraces in its widest limits an entire Christian life, on the ground, as we have already repeated, that only where that life is so lived, can the soul get close to God. Not that "the holiest worship

is a life," as the phrase is, — we say no such thing, — but that only with a true life can the holiest worship be connected.

This place is set apart from other places where men act, and speak, and feel ; but is it therefore for some worship which does in no way concern those other places ? Nay, but for the very purpose, that, when men return from this to those other places, they may act and speak and feel more truly, more nobly, more like Christian men. It is set apart from our homes, but it is to bless our homes ; — apart from scenes of suffering and wrong, but it is to relieve the sufferers, to rescue the wronged.

And let us never vainly meet in this house on Sundays, seeking to worship God, while all the week we have lived away from Christ ; — it cannot be. Let us not now vainly seek to dedicate this house as a house of worship, unless we are also prepared to dedicate it to the cause of all holiness, and to dedicate ourselves priests for such a service ; otherwise it is a hollow form of words, and the Lord will not receive nor bless our offering ; — unless, I say, we are prepared to dedicate it to the cause of all holiness, to the helping on of the kingdom of Christ upon earth, of Christ among men, — in the home, in the market-place, at the receipt of customs, in the ships of the sea, by the side of the lame, the blind, the captive bound in chains, and the captive, too, bound in sin, — of Christ in all these places, as well as in the temple of worship, or on the midnight mount of prayer. Let us not, by any thing connected with this place, help to perpetuate the idea, that there are special times and places, and those only, for the presence of Christ, and so for the exercise of his spirit ; that this temple, for instance, belongs to him where we may meet him, while all business matters and places belong to the spirit of the world, and are to be given up to it, and we are not to expect to meet Christ there.

If we believe in such an one, we believe in a false Christ ; it is not Jesus Christ, but Anti-Christ. Long enough, sadly be it said, long enough have men, even such as have earnestly sought to put themselves in a position to receive of the spirit of Jesus, taken themselves out of the world, become temple-worshippers, instead of remaining literally in the world, but delivered from its evil.

To the practical helping on of Christ's kingdom upon earth, then, do we dedicate this house, in order that it may even be a place for the highest worship.

Bearing in mind now, that we speak not of identity, but of connection, let us pass on to consider that holiness, in whose beauty we are to worship the Lord; for thus we may understand more concerning the worship itself.

Holiness is living up to the light given us, incorporating into life all the truth of Christ and all the spirit of God offered to us, standing in such a position as to take in all the spirit of grace which is pouring upon us.

But the position of man with reference to this truth and influence is such, that the words which furnish our text, not only exhort to holiness, but assure us also that the spirit of God dwelleth in us. From this fact we are to be taught, that man never receives a measured amount of truth and life, being told to live up to that, and be satisfied, for he is then holy; — so much given, and then the source shut off and withdrawn. It does not say, the spirit of God comes and visits you, and leaves a blessing; it says, the spirit of God dwelleth in you. A constant in-pouring of new light it will be, if we open our hearts to receive it, — if we resist it not.

Our life will be hid with Christ in God, simply because God's spirit will be deeply hid in us; and, where that spirit is, there is liberty, — there is freedom; and the soul's freedom is the right to grow, denying any limitations set by custom, society, average goodness, or by anything except this spirit of God. Hence, holiness to a soul in a true state, having this voice within, can never be measured as so much; by the time you have written that down, the spirit of God will have whispered again, and then holiness is something more.

Thus we shall find that the truest worship of yesterday may not be the highest worship of to-day. We are to look for this change, and to be ready to understand and meet it.

Part of our text, you are aware, consists of words uttered by David, when, with psalteries and harps, he gave thanks unto the Lord, and dedicated the tent in which was set the ark of God; — "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; — Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering

and come before him : worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

And in what did that worship consist, which the priest then performed in behalf of the people? "To offer burnt offerings upon the altar continually, morning and evening; and to do according to all that is written in the law of the Lord, which he commanded Israel."

"All that is written in the law." So are we to obey all that is written in the law; but our law is not written upon tables of stone, but on the tables of the heart, and He who writes it is always in the temple, "the Spirit of God, dwelling in you;" and He writes more and new each day; — a day in which he writes no new word, is a day from which we have shut out His spirit.

He is continually revealing to us more and more of his will, clearer and higher truth. We read the book of Christ; — and the words, which yesterday to us were perhaps only a pleasing figure, to-day seize upon us as a prophetic vision, — the light of God's present reflected from the world's future. What was yesterday a doubtful hope to us, is to-day a word to base a mighty faith upon. That which before led us so far only as with an undefined longing to ask, concerning the son of God, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" leads us now, in terms of glowing gratitude, to exclaim, "Lord, I believe!" That which before only made us count our absent friends, and look inquiringly upward, to-day reveals to us one of the very homes in heaven, and shows us our friends gathered there.

While, then, we dedicate this house to the worship of God our Father, — to faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the way to the Father, — to communion with a Holy Spirit, — to trust in boundless mercy and free grace, — to the hope of immortality, — we yet do not dedicate it to any stated, defined, limited forms of theology; — we dare not, for it is already dedicated to [that worship of God, of which the beauty is holiness,

We unite here for worship on a higher and broader ground of union, than what is called our distinctive theological belief, whereby we are named and set apart from others. Because, upon some points of theology, which we hold dear, we do

more closely sympathize together, it is natural and fit that we should habitually meet together as one society of worshippers, and listen to those who claim our sympathies. But yet, dear as those views may be to us, firmly as we may believe in their tendency to exert the most elevating influence upon man, and to lead him trustingly to God as a Father, and anxiously, but hopefully, to Christ as a Saviour, — yet, allowing all this, our occasion of union is, I trust, altogether broader than this; for, if it were not broader, and Jesus were now walking upon earth, I should sadly fear he would not stay his steps long enough on those narrow limits to give us this day his blessing. I should hesitate to say to him, in your behalf, that our bond of union as a Christian society was chiefly the belief and maintenance of such and such doctrines of theology, in distinction from, or even in opposition to, such and such of other Christians. I should sadly fear he would say, Christian society! nay, but do not call it by my name. If drawn together only thus, think not to read that book, and find the truth of heaven there; for it is spirit and it is life. Do not, if drawn together only thus, sit around that table; it is the table of my love! Do not, if drawn together only thus, take little children from their parents' arms, to carry them to that font of baptism! I should fear his look of saddened rebuke would for ever darken these walls.

But I should rejoice to say to him, that we came here as those who seek to worship God with a worship whose beauty shall be holiness; to hold communion with our Father in heaven; to open our hearts to him; to tell our wants and our sorrows; to lay aside our burdens; to feel our need of a higher life, of newness of life; to be led to repentance of sins; to gain assurance of forgiveness; to open our souls to the reception of the spirit of truth and Divine illumination; to learn our relation to God and to our fellow men; to seek how to bless those fellow men, and to do away with all that oppresses, wrongs, and degrades them; to listen to the voices uttered by asking hearts; to see what it is men are asking for, need, are ready for, in their struggle for progress, — and to see, too, in what way Jesus Christ can furnish it; to see what problem of life society is next ready to solve, and to see how Christ will answer

it ; to strive, in short, to bring his spirit into our hearts, and his kingdom, his veritable, absolute kingdom, upon earth.

I should rejoice to say this to him ; for I should feel sure that his approving smile would light these walls, and that his words would be, Then call this society by my name, — ye are my disciples. Read my word ; the truth shall be revealed to you. Tell here your griefs and sorrows ; the comforter shall come to you. Gather around this table of my love ; I will meet you there. Bring hither your little children ; they shall rest in my arms, while they receive the waters of baptism. This house was built by men's hands, but it has been consecrated by the Spirit of God ; hallowed be it henceforth as the place of prayer, — the gate of heaven. Thus would Jesus leave his blessing with us.

When we speak of not setting this place apart for one form of faith, and for that only, we do not mean to take any merely negative position ; in our regard for the opinions of others, to have no positive opinions of our own ; in our dread of bigotry and superstition, and of setting a weight upon progress, to lose our sense of the value of a clearly defined and absolute religion, not anxious for the truth so far as it is already revealed to us. But we would speak as we do, because of the very value we attach to what we ourselves hold as a definite and positive form of truth, founded on the ground of devotion to truth itself. And, since this desire for truth is the foundation of our attachment to our form of it, our only consistent aim will be, not to perpetuate this particular view of it, but to secure a way for the free developement of truth itself. Our homes are dear to us, because God has visited them with love and peace ; but yet, in consecrating that word *home*, we would not say it is for receiving and containing just such and so much love and peace, and then go, for fear the spirit should escape, go and shut the door ; for we believe that that spirit can come in more fully, — can lead us into much happier homes in heaven.

And upon this ground also, are we as a Christian society, to find the true union with other sects, who, upon theological questions, differ from us. It is not to be obtained by a mutual suppression of our peculiar views, by speaking only of points wherein we agree, and considerately passing over the others ; but by declaring freely all our belief, both what may be agreements

and what may be differences, all dear to us, sacred, because the result of our earnest search for truth in the love of truth.

Here, then, is our great point of union with other sects ; we do not wish to meet on any other ground, for we do not wish to meet on any other ground than where Jesus is. Those who walk peaceably together because they hold their various inherited faiths, which never struggled with doubt so as to call in this high love of truth to aid it, such men have no Christian union, however free they may be from unchristian contention.

But in this state of soul which moves to a single-hearted, earnest desire for truth itself, there may be a union of spirit ; and in his own good time will God give men to read together the letter also.

We come here, then, seeking for truth and life ; truth as it is in Jesus ; life for ourselves and our fellow-men ; —not merely to enlarge and support a sect of Christians ; but to prepare ourselves to become better and truer men, to prepare ourselves to labor with more love, to pray with more faith, to open our hearts to more of God's grace, to hold closer communion with Him, to live all the time nearer to Jesus ; — not, I say, to sustain a society ; but to quicken a spirit, to feed a soul, to win a heaven, to embody the love of Christ and the will of God, to give a form to holiness, to carry worship into life.

And does not all this tell us that there must be more, much more than prayer, and a silent listening to the pulpit, before we can be a church of Christ ? — that not he who stands here, but they who sit there, are to dedicate this house ; that there may be preaching here, but no worship there ; the mysteries of godliness revealed, but godliness still be hidden ; the plan of redemption unfolded, while the joy of the redeemed is unknown ; the love of God portrayed, while there is no deep response within ?

Except there be here that deep seeking after God, after life, after Christ, there can be no worship. It is when the spirit of God dwelleth in man, that man becomes the temple of God. Thousands might gather here, year after year, and yet this house never be consecrated. God's presence it is, which alone can consecrate this house ; — God's presence, let me repeat it ; and His presence comes to meet, to answer, the

seeking soul. And in proportion as that Presence is thus brought here to-day, is this house the house of God.

One soul humbly confessing its need of Christ, one earnest prayer for the help of God, one afflicted heart asking in joyous trust for the Comforter to come, one mother whispering a hope to bless more her children, one father an intent to erect a family altar ; — one such desire, prayer, trust, hope, were a truer consecration than all words of ascription and songs of praise ; because it secures the presence of, brings down from heaven, that Holy Spirit, which answers prayers, whispers comfort, blesses homes, waits at family altars, takes the hands of little children, — which leads to heaven, — which is of God.

A people might gather here Sunday after Sunday ; might sit here, and not meet God ; how lonely, cold, and cheerless ! In some hidden corner, some humble heart might tremblingly ask God to forgive and strengthen it ; then, upon that spot, would shine down a cheering ray from heaven. Thus is it for each to make the spot where he is seated, as surrounded with holy light. Oh ! that drawn hither thus, the whole house might be filled with the spirit, the felt presence, of God.

Behold, the place where we worship is the place where all that is holiest and deepest in our hearts utters itself. Parents tell here their joy and gratitude, by dedicating their little child to the God who gave it, — there is a place here for the wreath of spring flowers whose buds shall never wither. Hither come the aged with slow and thoughtful step ; as they draw near to heaven, drawing near to the altar ; with subdued hearts, confessing the love of Him, who long ago gave to them a childhood's home, and a mother's love, and never once since has left them ; they come here, asking for the hand of Jesus to guide them through the night whose shades are already gathering, — for the word of Jesus to tell them of the night, to tell them of the morning.

Hither come those, who, conscious of their need of higher help, and touched by the love of Jesus, desire to dedicate their hearts to their Saviour, and to remember him in the breaking of bread. Here shall be they, who, in unfeigned repentance and bitter sorrow, shall cry, " Lord, be merciful to me a sinner ! " — those, who, with earnest longing for a knowledge of the

truth, shall ask, "What shall I do to be saved?" Here shall be they, whose prayers shall be for submission and for faith; they who humbly ask for more help from heaven, who need encouragement and strength. Here shall be they, whose utterance is the agony of affliction; and, sitting side by side with them, those whose words are happy words, of thanksgiving and adoration. Before this altar, while prayers are offered, shall hearts be sealed two by two in sacred and joyous union. Before this same altar, while prayers are offered, shall be placed the lifeless forms of those whose spirits shall have gone to heaven.

Blessings here will be invoked, the blessings of a watchful Father, upon absent friends, whose ways are on the deep, or in foreign lands; for those friends, too, who, with their presence, breathe peace in our happy homes. In behalf of thousands of other homes, saddened ones, where human hearts are bowed down by ignorance and poverty, and wrong, will petition here be made. He who is the Father of the fatherless, and the widow's God, will be sought here.

To the utterance of all these things, which are deepest and holiest in our hearts, do we dedicate this house. But all these things, deep and holy, might be uttered, and yet be unanswered; doubt and darkness might brood here.

But lo! upon this spot will shine light coming through the cross of Christ.* To his cross then we dedicate it. And through what should the light come which falls upon the spot round which such associations cluster, if it be not through that cross of Christ? For what is there that ministers to all that is most dear to the human heart, if it be not the love and truth of Jesus? Though that cross there will shine upon us here, more than the outward light. The rays of Divine mercy are shining there; and Salvation is the word they write for man, in glowing colors. Oh! that we might read all that in that cross is written! It is not the mere symbol of agony and death, in gloomy shades; for only by looking up toward heaven, where are God, and angels, and waiting friends, can we see it. Bitter griefs and sorrows it does tell of; but it is the grief, it is

* Alluding to the cross, formed in the window above the pulpit.

the sorrow of a Saviour's love. A sacrifice it tells of ; but it is a willing one. In that cross are written, tenderness, strength,—humility, victory ; and, around it, life and immortality.

Would that we, my friends, as a band of his disciples, might indeed read the depth of his love and truth ; and also the mighty capacities, but the deep needs of man to which he came to minister. Would that we might really feel what Christ came to do, and really believe that it shall yet be done ; — to redeem a world of souls from the bondage of sin, to open heaven, to lead children to their Father ; nay, but to bring heaven here, to reveal the Father close by them. Would that we could measure the fearful nature of sin ; would that we could measure the joy of purity, the full meaning of an immortal soul, of a home in heaven ; then could we measure the depth of the love of Christ. Conscious of our weakness, of our spiritual coldness, of our inactive will, our deadness in trespasses and sins, our alienation from God, our distance from our Father's home, with tearful utterance should we seek strength, and help, and forgiveness, and redemption. Conscious, too, of the meaning of immortality, of sonship to God, of his spirit dwelling in us, of his hope sustaining us, of his love encouraging us, we should read in the words of Christ, truths deep, mighty, glorious enough for all intelligences, — the very wisdom of God.

To the cross of Christ then we dedicate this house ; — Christ the Saviour, the way to the Father ; — Christ the truth, the truth of Heaven ; — Christ the life too, the life of holiness here, and the life of immortality hereafter.

My friends, may we realize more fully and continually what it is to worship God, — the solemnity and joyousness of meeting here for such a purpose. To that worship let us to-day dedicate this house, by dedicating ourselves to the Lord. Let us consecrate ourselves anew this day to the service of Christ, with an earnest prayer to God, that henceforth we may live more devoted lives, — may listen more to that spirit which dwelleth in us, bless more ourselves, our friends, our fellow men, — may labor more for Christ's coming kingdom, turn to our Father more trustingly and hopefully, more like little children, — and may live more in the sunshine of His love.

In the spring time, we laid there the corner-stone of this house, asking God's blessing upon our work, and we did it in springtime hope and faith, joy and gratitude. Our labors have been blest. We this day consecrate the house itself, not less in hope and faith, joy and gratitude ; for the soul's springtime is when it sees God as a Father, knows Christ as a Saviour, and holds communion with a Holy Spirit.

UNDULATORY MOTION.

BY REV. THOMAS HILL.

As motion is the only means whereby power can be manifested in space and time, it follows that all perceptions must be gained through motions of some kind. Indeed, upon motion must the very existence of our physical frame depend ; upon motion, either apparent, as in the beating of the heart, or concealed, as in the changes of each molecule of blood. Nor are these hidden motions less important than those more easily observed. The continual play of the lungs is necessary to life, but not less necessary is the chemical change which is wrought by the air upon the blood ; a change depending upon an interchange of particles — a motion of inappreciable extent.

We speak of nothing incredible, therefore, when we say that almost every earthly blessing comes to us, or is received by us, through the medium of imperceptible motions, waves or undulations. All earthly gifts, or nearly all, seem to depend for their value upon an incessant quivering, kept up in all material things. What were a world of silence, a world of darkness, a world of uninterrupted frost ?

But sound is well known to be a quivering of the air, spreading from the sonorous body in widening waves. This little tremor of the air, how simple a thing ! And yet what blessings, through the foresight of creative love, has the Father bestowed upon us by its means ! By this tremulous

motion, he gives us the luxury of sounds, and enables us to hear the voices of friends, the chords of music, and the perpetual harmony of nature, which ever is sounding in the wakeful ear.

The more these things are studied, the more abundant is the proof that he who built the intricate labyrinths of the human ear, and who adjusted the varying densities and elasticities of the mingling atmosphere, acted from the fulness of an infinite love. Search the depths, or climb the heights of science, and you shall find only additional confirmation of the same truth which every common sight and sound proclaim. The ear is ever hearing "the voice of the Lord in the day breeze," and in the air of night; a voice from which none but the guilty need flee in shame.

As I sat last evening, to watch the daylight lingering sweetly on its farewell to the young moon and the evening star, the window closed against the chill air could not shut out the softened music of the natural sounds. The whistling of men returning from their work—the merry shouts of children at a distance—the rattling of homeward-bound wheels upon the streets, blended by a continuous roll of distant cars, carrying hundreds to their happy evening firesides, formed a harmony which moved me to gratitude, deeply as a cathedral chant of thanksgiving.

Still more wonderful is the variety of blessings which our Father has bestowed upon us in the inconceivably rapid pulsations of the ether constituting light. Who can tell how great a gift is the eye, and how great the light by which the eye sees? The softened hues of the distant landscape, the gay tints of flowers, the graceful forms of trees, the faces of those whom we love, the figured page which bears the symbols of their words of affection,—all these address to us their language through the eye. When the light of day has departed, how many sweet influences are poured upon us from the Pleiades and Orion, from Arcturus and his sons! No man can measure the value of that swift unwearied messenger—this quivering pulse—which is ever bearing to us messages from ten thousand distant worlds of glory. But would you feel how infinitely beyond your conceptions is the value of light, then should you see its return after the darkness of the night.

Rise at the dawn, to see the morning star,
In brightness scarcely dimmed by floating clouds,
That seek to hide it. Watch those fleecy clouds
Their first deep purple hue assume. How calm
They hover o'er the expectant earth, like wings
Of morning angels promising the day.
But, while we watch they change. From morning's brow
The sombre, thoughtful shadow passes off;
A richer crimson clothes the purple cloud,
And this to joyous scarlet brightens.
Thus, though no living thing be in thy sight,
The landscape wakes to life. Soon leafless trees,
And old brown earth herself, break forth in praise,
When into burnished gold the scarlet runs,
As the sun rises; while the stream of light,
Which, from the morning star, a silver thread
First flowed, then deepened in the purple cloud,
Now, in a flood of glory from the sun,
Fills every vale with loveliness, and breaks
In splendor o'er each hill-top, far and near.
O! who, that has a heart of flesh, can see
This 'spectacle of morning,' and not swell
With gratitude, too deep for words, towards Him
Who thus the day-spring taught to know its place,
And formed the eye of man to see its loveliness!

But we turn to the third illustration of our subject — the influence of heat. From the exhaustless power of the sun comes light, and also heat. Light is proved by incontestable evidence to consist of rapid undulations in an ether; and since heat suffers many of the same affections as light — is reflected, refracted, polarized, colored — it is reasonable to infer that heat consists of undulations also. Sounds, whose vibrations are within half an inch of each other, or at a greater distance apart than twenty feet are inaudible to the human ear. In the absence of knowledge, we may imagine that more rapid vibrations take place in the ether than those of light, and also, vibrations too slow for the human eye to perceive. And heat may be imagined as resulting from undulations whose distance from each other is greater than the thirty thousandth part of an inch. This distance is not one which is beyond the reach of measurement. The man of science has instruments which measure the hundred thousandths of an inch, and the millionths of a second, as readily as the yard stick and the clock measure feet and hours.

But whatever be the nature of the undulations of heat, there can be no doubt of its beneficent influences. When we behold the successive changes of ice into water, vapor, clouds and rain,—when we see the returning heat calling forth all the plants and animals from the sleep of winter,—when we find our own frames stiffened by the chilling blast and restored by the genial warmth, how can we ask for proofs that all things depend for life upon the influence of heat? And in the uses of fire among men,—to dress their food, to mould and weld that metal whose strength and worth is beyond that of gold, to convert water into a servant, powerful as the genii of Eastern tales, and obedient as the hand itself—have we not abundant evidence that God has adapted heat to the use of man, and that he has made all the life, progress and improvement of our race dependent upon this simple law of a perpetual, tremulous undulatory motion, producing light and heat. Thanks be to Him for all his gifts!

LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

WASHINGTON, JANUARY, 1849.

I have been intending, for a long time, to give you some facts bearing upon the Slavery question in the District; and if I felt authorized by a sufficiently distinct knowledge of the facts, should have done it long ago. As it is, the critical period which it has reached just now seems reason enough for writing,—and a very common misunderstanding of our position here is a further motive. It is assumed by very many that the population here coincides with the South, in position and feeling, which, strictly speaking, is very far from being the case. Seen from a distance, all beyond a certain line of latitude or longitude is thrown against a uniform background and massed as one; as I found people in Wisconsin who knew no difference between New York and New England, and to a Carolinian, Delaware and Virginia are reckoned as Northern States, and he says, "We don't trust them." The District is neutral territory, in a curiously consistent sense; and while this peculiarity of position has one advantage, in that men are habituated to having all shades of opinion set forth with equal vehemence, and so in many respects an uncommon liberality of

mind prevails, there is also the danger, that all may come to be regarded with the same good natured indifference. And the habit of having legislation on fundamental points done for them — not by them, which is an essential part of our constitution — has its effect in a certain shyness and backwardness among the people here, about taking the first step in any important measure of legal or municipal reform.

So much ought to be premised, to explain the fact, that the secret thought of almost every man here does not find continual and vehement expression, in regard to enormities such as the Slave trade, which the municipal law has tried in vain to suppress. The stillness of the people here is otherwise unaccountable, except that they have no direct control, — that the matter is already taken up by other hands, and that their own opinion is, or should be, well enough understood by those most concerned to know. Twenty-one years ago, a petition, signed by eleven hundred persons, including the best and most prominent men of the district, was presented to Congress, praying for the abolition of that traffic. Two or three years later, the Grand Jury, being consulted by a committee of Congress as to a proposed revision of the code, expressed themselves in the strongest terms of abhorrence respecting the same. At I know not what date, the city government undertook to lay a prohibitory tax upon it; but this was overruled by the courts, on the plea (perfectly valid) that the City Charter conferred no power to lay such a tax — each branch of business which the local authorities may control, being separately specified. The same thing was attempted again a year ago, but abandoned for the same reason; and so it continues to exist by sufferance, not only as a *permitted* but as a *favoured* branch of traffic, since every honest calling must pay its city tax. It receives positive protection from the non-interference of Congress; while by the citizens it is *ignored* as far as may be, and winked out of sight. Meanwhile, it retreats somewhat from public view. The frequented streets are never scandalized by the gangs or “coffles” of chained slaves, sometimes loosely described from men’s imagination; a public sale of slaves is a thing unknown, unless very rarely of some single person whose owner is removing or in debt; and a place of deposit or examination, which three years ago was a nuisance to those living in one of the most central streets of the city, has been transferred to an obscure distance. Two dealers are still found, and advertise (I believe) in papers published *elsewhere*, that they are prepared at all times to receive any number of slaves for the Southern trade.

So much for the few more obvious points of a traffic bewailed and execrated by all our better people, and only kept up by the negligence, or patronage, of Congress. Almost the

whole burden of it rests elsewhere ; and the city has little besides the misfortune of being suffered to remain the mart and entrepot of such a business, to answer for. The simple prohibition to *bring slaves here for sale*, would virtually annihilate the traffic. And when I have asked why an effort was not made this winter to present a memorial on the subject, so as to express the real feeling of great numbers in the city, the answer was, it was so certain that Slavery would come to an end here in a year or two, that it was thought best to let Congress take its own way, without any interference from local agitation.

Then as to Slavery itself — that is felt to be only a temporary and “deciduous” thing, already on its last legs. According to some statistics published in the National Era, there cannot be more than about a thousand Slaves in the city, owned by perhaps three hundred persons. It is true that the habit of regarding them by courtesy as the property of these persons, gives quite a different tone to the feeling on the subject, from what it is where slavery is not countenanced by law. But these few, in a population of twenty-five thousand, are all that are directly interested in continuing even this remnant of the system. For every one of these, ten are probably interested the other way, and will soon come to understand it. And it can hardly be mistaking the sense of the people here to say, as I have heard in various ways, that there would be hearty, general satisfaction (some say among ninety-nine hundredths of the people) if the thing were taken in hand by Congress, and finally — utterly done away. Among the reports in the local papers, is one, that measures are now taking to hold a public meeting, where the subject may be discussed and acted on by our citizens.

Several things have happened in these last few months to give remarkable prominence to this question just now. It is a year, within three or four days, since every one was startled with the account of the man who was seized at a boarding-house, and dragged away, after nearly paying for his freedom. He was ransomed and brought back by the exertions of several members of the House. Before this, attention had been called to the subject by a memorial against the traffic, by some twenty of our citizens, and the case of “Harriet Madison” came to light, illustrating the method by which the people of tender nerves ease over the painful process of parting with a slave. Then one or two illustrations occurred, and some old recollections were brought to light ; and finally, the crowning deed was done in the flight and re-capture of the fugitives of the Pearl. The long trial of that case before the criminal court opened the discussion of Slavery, in its length and breadth, from another point of view than the political, and must have

destroyed something of the *prestige* of inviolability which forms a sort of halo about it in so many minds. The final decision of the Superior court will not be given till another month; meanwhile, it forms one more element in the discussion now thrown so widely open. And the papers have said, within a day or two, that neither the "Wilmot Proviso," nor "Slavery in the District," will be taken by the South as test questions, to decide the point of union or separation—their force having been already lost in great measure; in part, probably, from the attitude of the North just now, and still more from the conviction that in both cases the South represents the real feeling that prevails among those to be effected by either measure.

In private, one is seldom confronted with actual and palpable instances of Slavery. Occasionally something turns up to illustrate, by a special living case, the inherent cruelty and injustice of the system. In some points, it is worse instead of better here, where it is against the general feeling of equity, than farther South, where it probably exists in a more normal state, and seems to tally with the sense of right of some very humane and conscientious persons. I have seen a pamphlet published in Georgia, on the moral and religious instruction of Slaves, entirely sincere, no doubt, and urging very excellent and humane motives. But here, where it is far outgrown by the prevailing moral sense, it cannot be anything else than a fret and irritation. And I do not think that I have overstated the prevalence or strength of the sentiment on the subject, which exists here, though deprived of some of the usual channels of expression.

The final qualifications that I shall mention of Slavery in the District, are these: that of the number I mention, some are only "bound or held to service for a term of years;" many obtain permission to purchase their liberty, which they do by laboring for wages and with the aid of charity; some have the money advanced or lent to them for the purpose, and refund it in the way stated; and the most common form perhaps of receiving the labor of Slaves, is when they hire their time of the owner at a certain rate, and then dispose of their services, having the surplus wages as their own. The scanty remnant of the system, burdensome and discreditable as it is, exists under all the qualifying circumstances I have mentioned. And while they are no justification of its intrinsic character, but only an additional reason and facility for its removal, they ought to be borne in mind, when the character of the city or District is judged, from this peculiar element in its institutions.

J. H. A.